BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Byrsa I. Mission archéologique française à Carthage. Rapports préliminaires des fouilles 1974-1976, sous la direction de Serge Lancel. (Collection de l'École française de Rome, 41) Rome, 1979.

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Introduction à la connaissance de Carthage: la colline de Byrsa à l'époque punique. Paris: Édition Recherches sur les Civilisations, 1983.

CARTHAGE

A HISTORY

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Translated by Antonia Nevill



(i.e., surviving Gr/Rom literary sources')

It will be seen that not the least of their difficulties from the fact that of necessity they used words in their hanguage (Greek or Latin) to speak of institutions or political which for the most part were deeply foreign to them.

A precious note on the 'constitution' of Carthage, included in a shapter of Book II of Aristotle's *Politics*, is due to the good opinion he held of Punic institutions. One may add pieces of information attered through Diodorus of Sicily and Trogus Pompaeus (or his abridger Justin), as well as in Polybius, Livy and Appian. The history' one can build with these *membra disjecta* is necessarily tragmentary. The reducing effect of passing through classical texts access specially to apply to the names of Carthaginian protagonists in this history: from a wealth of Punic names – but complicated and barbarian for a Greek or Latin tongue – only a tiny number have been preserved, simplified in their transcription. For Livy, everyone was called Hanno or Hannibal, Hamilcar or Mago.

FROM THE MAGONIDS TO OLIGARCHY: THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF CARTHAGE

From this historical wreckage, however, the first name to emerge, after Dido, belongs not to a Mago but to a Malchus. According to Justin (XVIII, 7), this person, a general (in Latin: dux), was vanquished in Sardinia after achieving successes in Africa and Sicily. As punishment for his failure in Sardinia, Malchus was sentenced to exile, in company with the remnants of his army. Unable to obtain a pardon, the exiles one day landed in Africa and besieged Carthage. However, Malchus' son Carthalon, a priest of Melqart, returning from Tyre, where he had been to deliver a tithe of the booty gained in Sicily, was urged by his father to join the rebels. Carthalon at first refused, so that he could go into the town to discharge his religious duties, then, having received the people's permission, rejoined his father. But the latter, not forgiving his son's first disobedience, accused him of being an insult to the wretchedness of the exiles and had him crucified, dressed in his priestly vestments, on a very tall cross erected opposite the town. Soon afterwards Malchus seized Carthage, summoned the People's Assembly and, confining his vengeance to those who had advised his exile, ordered the execution of ten senators. He himself was subsequently accused of tyranny and put to death. These events are supposed to have taken place in the middle of the sixth century.

As recounted by Justin alone - neither Herodotus nor Diodorus breathes a word of this strange story - the episode leaves one feeling uncomfortable. One thinks of Macbeth and his definition of life: 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'. In order to give it some acceptable interpretation, a 'decoding' of the account was recently proposed, throwing light on its mythical and religious background. First, it was pointed out that the name Malchus - in any case fairly badly treated in Justin's manuscript tradition - conceals a Latinized form of the root MLK (Phoenician milk), meaning 'the king'. So Malchus is not a historical person but 'the king', the king par excellence, and the crucifixion of his son Carthalon, tortured while wearing his priestly attire, is the sacrifice of the king or rather of the king's son. Certainly, the pyre on which Dido perished, on which the holocaust of thousands of young victims was practised for centuries, and on which in the city's final days Hasdrubal's wife cast herself, is missing here. But it is true that one reads stories in the Old Testament telling of the sacrifice of royal sons by hanging or crucifixion. The conclusion one is tempted to draw is that Trogus Pompaeus, abridged by Justin, did not use a 'historical' work for this account, but a treatise on Carthaginian human sacrifice (G. and C. Picard, 1970, pp. 54-5). Wishing to turn the 'religious sociology' text he was using back into political history, he was perhaps inspired by a certain amount of knowledge that he, like his contemporaries, possessed about the institutions of Carthage at the time of the Punic Wars. Hence the anachronisms: the mention of 'senators', the 'People's Assembly', whose political role is not reliably vouched for until several centuries later.

PUNIC 'ROYALTY'

This page of Justin, which exemplifies the difficulties of interpretation raised by classical texts referring to the earliest episodes in Carthage's history, is equally revealing about the problems relating to data on the institutions. The attempt above to travel back through this text to the Semitic substratum and religious background rests largely on the recognition in the name Malchus of the Phoenician root of the word for king, MLK. Justin merely says, on two occasions, that Malchus is dux, 'war leader', and that what caused his downfall was the accusation levelled against him that he

was aspiring to 'royal power': adfectati regni accusatus (XVIII, 18). He paid with his life for that ambition and, adds Justin (XVIII, 19), his successor was the 'general' Mago (Mago imperator), thus the first of those known as the Magonids, 'who by his talents enhanced the power, territory and military glory of Carthage'.

It happened that classical authors gave the title 'kings' (Greek basileis, Latin reges), despite their collegial administration, to the supreme magistrates in charge in Carthage from at least the third century - the 'suffetes', who in fact bore a closer resemblance to the Roman 'consuls'. But in the text and for the era with which we are concerned, what clearly comes to the fore is the reality of a military command. Malchus, like his successor Mago, is a war leader, and it is as commanders of armies that we know Mago's descendants. One of his sons or grandsons, Hamilcar, bears the title of 'king' (basileus) in Herodotus' text (VII, 165) which informs us that in 480 he commanded the famous expedition to Sicily; but Herodotus adds (VII, 166) that he had become king of the Carthaginians 'by virtue of his valour', thus by selection and not birth. The concept of 'dynasty', often used about the Magonids, must therefore be relativized: 'The Carthaginian king is chosen for his personal qualities from a family who pass on to him a hereditary charisma' (G. C. Picard 1991, p. 388). In any case, Latin texts mentioning certain of the Magonids sometimes describe them as imperator, dictator and dux (Justin, XIX, 1, 3, 7, 8; 2, 5; Pliny, NH, V, 8 and VI, 200), all terms which imply the granting of plenary powers, but temporary and probably renewed: one of Mago's sons, Hasdrubal, was invested eleven times with the 'dictatorship'. Regarding the amount of authority vested in the elected occupant of this temporary 'royalty', one can only surmise. Diodorus (XIII, 43, 5 and XIV, 34, 5) says of the Magonids that they were 'kings by virtue of the laws', which presupposes a legal procedure and not an arbitrary seizing of power, but we know nothing more, as political bodies such as the People's Assembly or the Council of the Elders are not attested in that period. It is admitted, however, reflecting what is a known fact from very early times in Phoenician cities in the east, that a Council of Elders must have been in existence from the earliest times in Carthage (Sznycer, 1978, p. 577).

What is certain, at least, is that this 'quasi-royal' power remained in one family for four generations, during which generals and admirals won renown, for instance, like Hanno the Navigator in the third generation who, let it be said in passing, is referred to as 'king' (basileus) in the Heidelberg manuscript, which has preserved

for us the Greek version of the famous *Periplus*. Carthage was at the time essentially a thalassocracy, whose families of shipowners had to agree to entrust to one of them prerogatives which were apparently not hereditary and which, as we have just seen, bore the risk of being frequently called into question. Naturally the imprecision, not to say the total silence, of our sources makes it hard to pinpoint the chronological end of this dynasty. A distinguished study made about thirty years ago identified Himilco as the last of the Magonids, and doubtless also the last 'king' to emerge from that thalassocracy through a certain consensus whose political instruments remain obscure (Maurin, 1962, pp. 5–43).

At the very beginning of the fourth century Himilco's campaigns in Sicily, marked by sacrilegious acts regarding Greek cults and by some spectacular profanations, notably at Agrigentum and Syracuse, ended in disaster. The Punic army was ravaged by epidemics and an enormous fire destroyed the fleet that was besieging Syracuse. As if struck by madness, Himilco fled to Africa after negotiating a shameful peace and deserting his Libyan and Iberian contingents. Returning to Carthage, he did public penance: clad in slaves' clothing, he went to all the temples in the city proclaiming the wrongs he had committed and then killed himself in his own home. According to L. Maurin, that suicide marked the end of the Magonids, whose family, henceforth accursed, was removed from power for good. It was then, in 396 - in the same year that a cult in honour of the Greek goddesses of Sicily, Demeter and Kore, was inaugurated in Carthage - that the aristocracy is supposed to have set up the tribunal of the One Hundred and Four to run political life. It is neverthless still possible that a last Mago, in power around 370, may have extended the long reign of this family of 'generalkings'. He was responsible for halting a terrible revolt by the Libyans, who had laid siege to Carthage, and for resuming the initiative in Sicily after the disaster undergone by Himilco.

THE ARISTOCRATIC REPUBLIC

'In the fourth century, then, Carthage presents the image of itself that modern people are accustomed to evoke: that of an aristocratic republic, a sort of ancient Venice, secret and well ordered, where individuals are subject to the harsh laws of the austere and disciplined rich.' This sentence by G. C. Picard (1970, p. 123) suggests the essence of the new countenance presented by the Punic city at

that time to its chief partner, the Greek world, which knew it well, if for no other reason than the fierce struggle going on in Sicily.

In fact, the fourth century in Carthage was one of sometimes violent transitions and changes. The 'republic' was not instituted overnight. After the Magonids, a new family took over the running of affairs. Its leader was Hanno the Great, whom Justin (XXI, 4, 1) refers to as princeps Carthaginensium, stressing the wealth and power of his house. It was he who, in 368, was appointed generalin chief and given charge of operations against Dionysius I. The way in which Justin relates his downfall, while he was trying to make use of his fortune to usurp power, clearly shows that he could not be regarded as a 'king' in the manner of his predecessors, and also that he relied on support from brotherhoods, Aristotle's syssitia, the Semitic mizrah, kinds of societies or 'colleges' whose solidarity was expressed in concrete fashion by banquets. But apparently a novelty in the public life of Carthage - Hanno had a political rival in the person of someone whom Justin calls Suniatus (perhaps a corruption of the Punic name Eschmouniaton) and who seems likely to have been the leader of the majority in the Council of the Elders: potentissimus Poenorum, as Justin says of him. The original form of royalty that the Carthaginians had known for two centuries appears well and truly dead. It died definitively on the cross where, in 308, the general Bomilcar paid for his attempt to seize power by a military putsch by taking advantage of the difficulties of the city besieged by Agathocles. But the political bodies which Aristotle knew and esteemed had already been established.

CARTHAGE'S 'CONSTITUTION'

In the view of the Greek philosopher, the Carthaginian institutions must have had an archaic flavour. That may explain why, aside from the analogies he perceived between them, he drew a parallel between the *politeia* of Carthage and that of Sparta or of Crete. It has been shown quite recently (Weil, 1961) that Aristotle's image of the Punic city was by no means inflexible and that, between Book II of the *Politics*, in which the eulogy of Carthage's political institutions is almost without reservation (although Aristotle points out the danger of a plurality of public offices) and Book V (chapters vii, 4 and xii, 12) in which mention is made of attempts to establish a tyranny, notably that of Hanno 'the Great', Aristotle was aware of the upheavals of the first half of the fourth century and brought his

information on the subject of Carthage up to date. These subtle variations must be taken into account, but the essential remains the full marks awarded by the Greek philosopher to the Punic political system, and the picture he draws may be judged as reflecting the state of affairs that existed in the second half of the fourth century.

The 'constitution' of Carthage is considered to be one of the 'mixed constitutions', that is to say, those that were deemed to contain the best elements of each of the three great political systems that divided the ancient world among them: monarchic, aristocratic (or oligarchic) and democratic. From the monarchic system Carthage drew a strong executive power, in this particular case the 'kings' (basileis), or at least the very special kind of royalty that we have seen, whose power was balanced by that of a deliberative assembly, the Council of Elders (gerousia) and controlled by another chamber, a sort of tribunal, the One Hundred and Four, which seems to have been of recent creation and whose importance Aristotle underlines by designating it 'the Supreme Magistrature of the Hundred' (II, xi, 7). In these two bodies lay the simultaneously aristocratic and oligarchic aspect of the Punic system. Aristotle indeed emphasized a feature that seemed to him to be original and completely appropriate in this organization. Among the Carthaginians, he said, it is believed that in the election of magistrates account must be taken not only of merit but also of wealth, for a poverty-stricken citizen cannot be a good magistrate and have the necessary leisure time. So if election according to wealth is an oligarchic principle and choice according to merit an aristocratic principle, the system on which, among others, the constitutional rules of the Carthaginians repose presents a third combination (II, xi, 9-10). According to him, another significant feature of a clear tendency towards oligarchy is the fact that members were recruited by cooption for the 'pentarchies' (that is, bodies each composed of five magistrates, the existence of which we know only through Aristotle), who had sovereign power to make decisions about many important matters (II, xi, 7). As for the democratic aspect of the regime, it was marked by the existence of the People's Assembly (demos) and the importance of its role. This role of arbitration seems clearly defined:

Together with the Elders, the kings have power to decide whether or not to present a matter to the people, when all are in agreement; if not, it is up to the people to decide. Regarding matters presented to the people, the latter are granted not only the right to listen to the decisions of the executive, but also the power to come to a decision of their own with full power; and

every citizen who so desires can put forward counter-proposals, something that does not exist in other constitutions (II, xi, 5–6).

and and done – with weights and counterweights, should have aroused the Greek philosopher's admiration. From this exposition, it is easier to understand the working difficulties and the number of crises in embryo that such a regime would contain.

Aristotle's text does not deal by name with a magistrature which appears, in an author such as Livy, to be the supreme one in Carthage at the time of the Punic Wars, especially in Hannibal's era, that of the suffetes. Here we are approaching one of the most delicate institutional questions, largely because of the ambiguity of the terms used by classical authors to convey Carthaginian political realities. Formed on the root ŠPT, the word shophet (more probably pronounced shouphet in Phoenico-Punic) is well attested in Punic inscriptions, but it is also to be found in Latin transcription (suf[f]es, plural suf[f]etes) in authors, and later in certain Latin inscriptions, the magistrature having survived in African cities of ancient Punic culture. On the other hand, hardly any Greek transcription is known: the word used by the Hellenes is the one meaning royalty, basileus, the very one employed by Aristotle in the page we have just seen on Carthage's constitution. Hence the problem, with modern scholars forming two schools of thought - those who, following Gsell (vol. II, 1921, p. 194), accept the argument that the terms basileus, rex and sufes are synonymous, and those who do not think that the suffetes elected for one year in the Carthage of Hannibal's time are comparable with the 'kings' of Carthage known in the sixth and fifth centuries, whom Aristotle identified with the Lacedaemonian basileis (e.g. G. and C. Picard, 1970, p. 141). Indeed it seems difficult to decide between this view and that of those (e.g. Sznycer, 1978, pp. 567-70) who consider that, even in the earliest times, Carthage never had 'kings', and that at any time the specifically Semitic reality of the suffetate is what must be understood to underlie the classical terms basileus and rex.

THE 'DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION'

The word 'revolution' is to be avoided, with its implication of brutal changes and accelerated processes, even of precise dates,

which are not in fact attested. It is still the questions raised by the institution of the suffetes that allow the problem to be posed Starting from a certain epoch, the testimony of early authors and of inscriptions establishes that there were two suffetes, collegially appointed for one year and eponymous with that year. It is generally agreed that the appearance of the two annual suffetes occurs either about the end of the fourth century or during the third. It has often been thought that the Roman institution of two annual and eponymous consuls may have been copied, but Semitic experts point out that two suffetes conjointly exercising their authority were already known in Tyre in the fifth century (Sznycer, 1978, p. 571). Some have proposed linking the regular institution of the annual collegial suffetate in Carthage with a 'democratic revolution' supposed to have occurred in the Punic city at the outcome of the first Punic War, and the exact date of 237 BC has been put forward (G. and C. Picard, 1970, p. 307). It is no more than a hypothesis, chiefly inspired by a few lines of Polybius, which deserve to be quoted, since they give a good account, from the viewpoint of a Greek in the entourage of Scipio Aemilianus, of the development of political life in Carthage after Aristotle's study.

Regarding the Carthaginian state, it seems to me that its institutions . . . were well thought out. There were kings; the council of the elders, of aristocratic nature, for its part had certain powers at its disposal and the people were sovereign in matters within their jurisdiction. Taken as a whole, the organization of power in Carthage resembled what it was in Rome or Sparta. But at the time when Hannibal's war commenced, the Carthaginian constitution had deteriorated and that of the Romans was superior. The evolution of every individual, every political society, every human undertaking is marked by a period of growth, a period of maturity, a period of decline . . . The Carthaginians had known power and blossoming some time before the Romans and had gone past their peak just at the time when Rome was in full vigour, at least in so far as its system of government is concerned. In Carthage the voice of the people had become predominant in deliberations, whereas in Rome the senate was at the full height of its powers. For the Carthaginians, it was the opinion of the greatest number that prevailed; for the Romans, that of the elite of its citizens. (VI, 51)

Polybius' text thus clearly stresses the preponderance of the People's Assembly, about the end of the third century, and he considered it the result of a warping or debasement of the balance of power extolled by Aristotle slightly over a century earlier. There are historical indications of that growing power of the popular assembly, even stronger some years later at the beginning of the second century, after the unhappy outcome for Carthage of the second Punic War. Livy (XXXIII, 46) tells how Hannibal, on taking charge as a suffete in 196, used the occasion of a disagreement he had with a magistrate whom the Latin historian describes as quaestor to settle scores with the powerful 'order of judges' (ordo iudicum). This quaestor (apparently a magistrate entrusted with financial duties), who belonged to the faction opposed to Hannibal and was almost certain of impunity since, on leaving office, he was bound to enter the order of judges, who were irremovable magistrates, ignored the suffete's summons. Hannibal had him brought by an attendant before the People's Assembly and took advantage of that Assembly's support to put through a law determining that in future the judges would be elected each year, and that no one could be a judge for two consecutive years.

If the facts recorded by Livy are correct, it would seem that the senate, or if preferred the Council of Elders (gerousia), was not consulted in what was nevertheless an important matter, and that the control exercised by the People's Assembly led directly to the adoption of demagogic attitudes by the top magistrates. In this particular context, however, Hannibal's personal situation must be taken into account; that he should have done everything in his power to keep the Elders at bay is not surprising. They included those he was then trying to force to make restitution of their ill-gotten gains, in order to lighten the taxes demanded from the ordinary citizens to pay the war indemnity imposed by Rome. They would not hesitate to get rid of him by handing him over to the Romans. Hannibal, as we shall see (below, p. 403), anticipated them by flight and exile.

Convened by the suffetes, at least from the end of the fourth century, the People's Assembly numbered among its responsibilities the election of generals, at least from the time of the first Punic War, until the middle of the third century (Polybius, I, 82, 12; Diodorus, XXV, 8). It is known that in 221 the choice of Hannibal to command the army of Spain was ratified by the popular assembly. One would like to know the composition of this assembly: male citizens, probably, but certain groups of workers may have been excluded. Another question to which there is little in the way of reply is under what conditions could the right of citizenship, and thus the

Carthage? In exceptional circumstances, foreigners were able to obtain Punic citizenship. During the second Punic War two of Hannibal's officers, Greek by name and of Syracusan origin, but citizens of Carthage (their mother was Carthaginian) formed part of an embassy addressed to the tyrant of Syracuse, Hieronymus (Polybius, VII, 2, 4; Livy, XXIV, 6, 2). And Hannibal promised his soldiers, in the event of victory, civitas ex virtute as a reward.

Below the high magistrates, that is, below the suffetes and judges, other magistrates and functionaries were known in Carthage, sporadically and sometimes rather vaguely. The quaestor, subordinate to the suffete, with whom Hannibal was in dispute, as we have seen, was perhaps one of a body of what the inscriptions term the MHSBM, literally 'accountants', who were doubtless, like the Roman quaestors, magistrates concerned with finance (Sznycer, 1978, p. 585). It is tempting to equate with the Roman censor despite the apparent difference in rank, for the censor appointed every five years in Rome was a very important figure - a DR RKT, 'chief valuer', known not through a text from Carthage but through a Punic inscription from the isle of Gozo, near Malta (Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, I, 132). Similarly, we can mention and suppose that they held responsibility in the Punic metropolis, magistrates known through neo-Punic texts from Leptis Magna, the MHZM, 'inspectors of markets', who may be likened to Roman aediles (Levi Della Vida, 1971, p. 457). While fulfilling their office, all these magistrates had need of what were formerly called 'clerks' in our own administrations: these are the 'scribes' or 'secretaries', sopherim, whose appellative, SPR, figures in several Carthaginian inscriptions. One particular problem is that posed by numerous mentions in the Punic epigraphy of Carthage of people bearing the title RB, rab, that is, 'chief', if the word is followed by a determiner (e.g. rab sopherim, 'chief of scribes'; see Bonnet, 1991, p. 154), or 'notable', 'dignitary' if the title is used on its own in a rather obscure fashion, which often occurs in Carthage.

The Development of the City Between the Fifth Century and 146 BC

Much has been written about the 'fifth-century crisis' in Carthage, on the supposition that the defeat of Hamilcar, son of Mago, beaten by Gelon of Syracuse at Himera in Sicily in 480 BC, had marked the moment of the Punic city's first decline. Let us consider it. This opinion was based on a belief that there was a dearth of imported, mainly Attic pottery in the grave goods datable to this era, but it has not held good in the light of reviews of Carthaginian collections undertaken in recent years. In fact, many more black-glazed, undecorated Attic vases, and even those with red ornamentation, are to be found than had been believed (Morel, 1980). And recent excavations, in particular those of the French mission, have appreciably increased the amount of evidence of those imports (Morel, 1982 and 1983). The impression of impoverishment was also derived in part from the supposed rarity of fifth-century tombs, which are curiously absent from the cemeteries and very sparse in content when they are recognized. The truth is that people have not always been able to recognize the burials of that period, which only occasionally form homogeneous ensembles in Carthage, unlike what happened in other centuries (Lancel, 1990, pp. 23-5).

It had long been known that Carthage had compensated for the setback in Sicily by building up an African territory for itself and breaking free of the annual tribute paid to the Libyans since its founding. These two events, which were certainly more or less concomitant, are customarily dated to the second quarter of the fifth century, that is, a few years after the Himera defeat. With somewhat less precision, the excavations recently carried out

in Carthage also place in this era a decisive stage in its urban development.

FIFTH- AND FOURTH-CENTURY CARTHAGE

The German mission's excavations along the shore, in the Avenue de la République, opposite the former Bey's palace, have in fact provided evidence for the establishment of a whole dwelling area, built on backfill from the archaic era and making an advance towards the sea of several dozen metres in comparison with the former shoreline (figure 69). Farther to the east, on the sea side, a very deep stratum is formed by sea sand absolutely devoid of any archaeological material. It is therefore certain that occupation of the terrain in the archaic era had halted well behind the line of the present shore even though, as we shall see, the sea level was at that time perceptibly lower than it is today.

In a very rich stratigraphic zone, continuously occupied from the fifth century BC until the Byzantine era, the German excavations could not be carried out over an 'open area' but were effected in the form of large and deep sondages, which do not allow complete units to be uncovered and necessitate extrapolations. With these

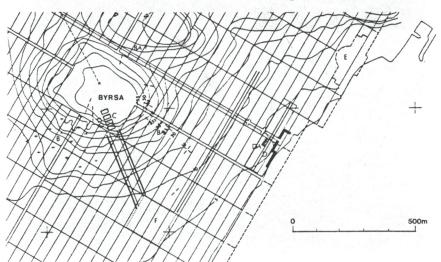
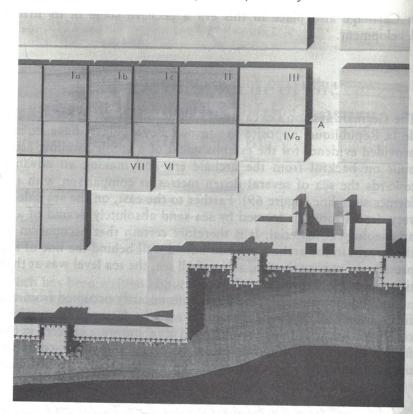


FIGURE 69 The site of the sea-front area excavated by the German mission. DA debris from the archaic period; D sea wall and gate (plan made by the German Archaeological Mission on the basis of a Roman survey).



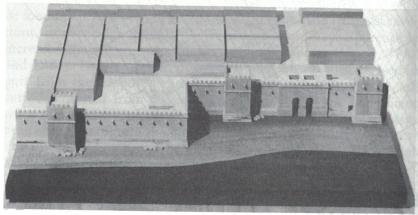


FIGURE 70 The sea-front area from the fifth century to the beginning of the third. A is the street leading to the monumental sea gate, flanked by two towers. Note the space left clear between the blocks of houses and the city wall overlooking the sea (model by the German Archaeological Institute, Rome).

reservations, the excavation and meticulous observation of the surroundings permit a distinction to be drawn between several stages of occupation in this zone. At an early date, in the fifth century, units of habitation of fairly modest size, with varied and atypical layouts, having no peristyle, were built in such a way as to leave between them and the wall bordering the shore, erected in the same period, an open space estimated at 60 cubits (or about 30 metres) (figure 70). The street serving this quarter, which lay at right angles to the shore and on a roughly east-west axis (and would more or less become the decumanus I north of Roman Carthage) led on to a monumental gate in the sea defence wall, flanked by towers. It goes without saying that only the foundation of this structure was brought to light, and the reconstruction of its elevation is even more hypothetical than that of its plan (figure 71). The use of a pump during the excavation allowed the discovery, at the base of the foundations, of the horizontal groove hollowed out by the incoming tide during the period prior to the positioning of the breakwater (Rakob, 1984, p. 8). Now, this mark is situated 50 centimetres below today's sea level. This means that at the foot of



FIGURE 71 The large stone slabs of the base of the sea wall in the fifth century. The big blocks visible in the foreground served as breakwaters; in the background the axial drain of the Roman decumanus I north can be seen (German Archaeological Institute, Rome).

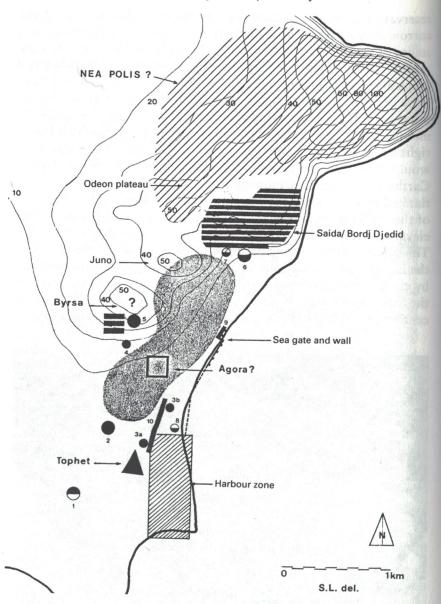


FIGURE 72 The site of Carthage (end of the fifth to the beginning of the third century BC). In the middle and on the sea-front, in light grey, are dwelling areas, bounded to the north by the cemeteries of Saïda-Bordj-Djedid and to the west by that of the south-west slope of Byrsa. The peripheral industrial zones are shown by circles: all black for metal workshops, white over black for potters, black over white for a fuller's workshop (plan from S. Lancel, 1985, p. 737).

the fifth-century wall there was then a flat, sandy shore, flattened by the waves and suitable for future extensions. Farther south at different points along the shore, findings of either coping blocks or even foundation or plinth blocks enabled Rakob to suggest that this sea wall followed a more or less continuous line at least as far as the environs of the circular lagoon, that is to say, what would later be Carthage's military port (figure 72). There indeed, very close to the present shore, the foundation of a wall structure was discovered that could well have belonged to one of the wall's towers or bastions (Rakob, 1987, p. 335).

Only extensive surface excavations, which are extremely difficult in view of the current built-up state of the area, would enable us to establish the boundaries of the fifth-century city. But observations made earlier, notably by C. Saumagne, lead one to think that the town of that period could not have extended southwards to any great degree. It even seems more than likely that, until the Hellenistic era, part of the ground situated lower than the present-day 5-metre contour mark, set back from the sea wall built in the fifth century, remained if not totally unused at least not included in the systematic overall town plan. Between the sea and the sector where, hypothetically, the agora might be sited, there seems to have been a marshy area that was extended farther southward by the lagoon zone, where the inner ports or 'cothons' would be established (Saumagne, 1931, p. 654; Lancel, 1990, p. 13). We will return later on to this situation when discussing the difficult problem of the port installations of Punic Carthage.

In various other sectors of the town, the spread of dwelling zones in the fifth and fourth centuries can be approximately mapped out from what recent sondages, coupled with earlier discoveries, have revealed about the siting of small industrial and artisanal zones, especially those involving activities incompatible with living areas, such as metal workshops. The information thus provided adds to that from the identification of cemeteries actively in use then, and helps us to mark out the space devoted to urbanization at that time (figure 72).

So we find that to the north and west, except perhaps towards the so-called hill of Juno, the primitive town gained only very little ground from the oldest cemeteries. This is especially the case in the north-east, below the heights of Bordj-Djedid, around the Roman site of the Antonine Baths, where former excavations had revealed fifth-century tombs and perhaps even fourth-century ones in some instances, scattered among still earlier burials (Lancel, 1990,

pp. 24-5). These cemeteries nearest to the city of the living were themselves bordered on their earliest fringes - which were no longer in use for funerary purposes - by artisanal zones clearly marking the limits of dwelling areas: for example, to the north, potters' kilns discovered previously by Père Delattre and P. Gauckler on the lowest slopes of Dermech and Douimès (points 6 and 7 on figure 72). To the west, on the middle and lower southern slopes of the hill of Byrsa, the ground is densely filled, at the edge of a cemetery which is still in use, by vestiges of metal workshops, which the French mission in its recent excavations was able to date to between the end of the fifth and the end of the third centuries (points 4 and 5 on figure 72). Towards the south, the industrial sites recorded seem to imply that, for the period under consideration (up to the middle of the third century), the dwelling area could not have extended as far as the tophet, even in that part of the site above the 5-metre contour mark, set back from the lagoon shore zone.

In this sector several areas of metal workshops have been brought to light in the last few years, with a chronology sometimes extending down to the end of the third century. A notable example was a workshop unearthed by Tunisian archaeologists (point 2 on figure 72), while in the environs of the future trading port, as well as within the circular zone of the future war port, American and British teams similarly discovered indubitable traces of metal workshops (points 3a and 3b on figure 72). We may also recall that, previously, excavations for the foundations of the marine biology laboratory, situated between the two lagoons on the sea side, had enabled a potter's workshop to be recognized (point 8 on figure 72). And Cintas had subsequently quite justifiably used that potter's kiln as a basis for his argument refuting the contemporaneous existence of the two harbour basins (Cintas, 1976, p. 206). We shall see further on that the argument lost its validity, at least for the last half-century of independent Carthage.

The very latest developments in current excavations, not yet known at the time I write, will doubtless confirm the great effort of systematic town planning and the establishment of a coordinated street layout undertaken in this period in the central part of the town, chiefly between the hills of Juno and Byrsa and the shore. It was then, and very probably from the fifth century onwards, that Carthaginian town planners did their best to harmonize the orientations which subsequently governed the urban development of the city, in particular by adapting the almost regular and orthogonal

grid pattern of the low town to the fan-shaped districts of the south and east slopes of the Byrsa hill. The agora, which should be discovered one day, must have acted as a hub. To this vigorously expanding central urban nucleus the sea defence wall discovered by the German mission provided a frontage that was spectacular and indeed dazzling, when one remembers that its huge blocks of El-Haouaria sandstone, surmounted by cornices decorated with mouldings, were clad with fine white stucco which sparkled in the sunlight.

Confined on the south by an area of lagoons in the context of which, to the east of the tophet, the harbour installations are still hard to discern, the town of the Magonids saw the horizon of its potential expansion to the north and north-east restricted by a belt of cemeteries that had yielded hardly an inch of ground since the archaic era. As far as they can be dated, the traces of habitation (cisterns and floor levels) brought to light in the present park area of the Antonine Baths, above the oldest burial levels, seem to be no earlier than the third century (Lancel, 1990, pp. 28–9). And it will be seen that in the Saïda sector (formerly known as Sainte-Monique) the funeral zone which Père Delattre had called 'the cemetery of the Rabs' was virtually never out of use right up to the last days of the city. In that period, in order to spread north towards the heights of Sidi-bou-Saïd, the city of the living had to straddle the domain of the dead, by way of fairly narrow passages.

We are certainly steered in this direction by the sole text which we can compare with archaeological data for this period. I am speaking of the detailed account left to us by Diodorus of Sicily (XX, 44) of the coup d'état stirred up in Carthage by a general named Bomilcar (= Bodmelgart) when, appointed together with another military chief to operate the city's defences at the time of Agathocles' expedition in 308, he attempted to seize power. Diodorus shows us Bomilcar reviewing his troops in a locality called Nea Polis (the 'New Town'), 'situated a short distance from old Carthage'; then, keeping 4500 soldiers with him (or 1500, according to a variation in the manuscript tradition), he divided them into five columns, which made their way towards the agora through the streets of the old town. There, however, resistance was formed to the 'putschists' and Bomilcar and his supporters were forced to fall back through the 'narrow streets' towards the 'New Town', where they took refuge in a 'high place'. Without being truly precise, the topographical data of the text are unequivocal: the Nea Polis locality, the point of departure and retreat for Bomilcar and his men,

comprises heights in comparison with the agora, which we know from descriptions relating to a slightly later era (Appian, Libyca, 128) to have been situated in the small littoral plain a little to the north of the harbours. This locality also includes open spaces adequate for the assembly and manoeuvres of several thousand men: in short, a sort of suburb, with dwellings as yet scattered.

Stéphane Gsell had already stressed that these data fitted in well with 'the region lying to the north of the cemetery zone' (HAAN, vol. II, 1921, pp. 14-15) and, let it be said more precisely, with the present 'plateau of the Odeon' and the ground which, from there, rises towards Sidi-bou-Saïd (Lancel, 1984, pp. 39-40). Whatever the problems posed by the name Nea Polis used by Diodorus (let us remember that the name Carthage 'Qart Hadasht' already means 'New Town'), it has to be admitted that at the very latest around the end of the fourth century the urban development of the city, among others, materialized in the form of a 'Newtown-by-Carthage' beyond the line of the cemeteries, that is, beyond the arc formed by the heights of Byrsa and Juno and the lower slopes of the plateau of the Odeon and Bordj-Djedid. It was the beginning of the vast suburban quarter, a veritable town bordering on, and to some extent surrounding, the old one - but probably with a different occupation of the ground and a more loosely woven urban fabric - later known under the name of Megara (Sznycer, 1986, pp. 123-31).